

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT.

Hon. Thos. F. Rucker, Late Democratic Chief, Set Free.
He Violated no Law.—Just an "Honest Mistake."

For nearly two years the Kicker has been urging the people of Scott county to keep an eye on the Rucker case. Not that I had any doubt about the outcome, but I just wanted you to watch ONE CASE in which "the party" was interested and see what they did to it. The average tax-payer refuses to believe the conditions that exist in this county.

Mr. Rucker was set free Friday of last week.
How did it happen?
You will have to ask the prosecuting attorney and other manipulators of "justice." I am not on the inside of how things are done. I might tell how I think the trick was turned, but that might involve me in another libel suit.

In 1911 Mr. Rucker was the editor of the Democrat and the recognized leader of the Democratic hosts. Collector Rucker was editor of the Morley Banner. The two tried themselves to see which could say the ugliest things about the editor of the Kicker. In this contest the collector was an easy winner.

In December the Democratic central committee got together to arrange to open the campaign of 1912. A note for \$500, signed by some of our most highly respected Democrats, was turned over to Mr. Rucker as a starter. A few days later he tried to cash this note at the Illinois bank, it was a gilt edged note, but the bank did not have the money to spare. Whether or not he succeeded in cashing the note may never be known outside the "inner circle."

A few days later Mr. Rucker's checks began to flow into the Benton bank where he had no money. For several days he was within 50 miles of Benton drawing these checks and getting money on them, but it seems that no effort was made to arrest him. By his checks he could have been traced to New Orleans.

After his check book gave out all trace of him was lost until a few months later when a reward was posted in the post office here with his picture. The reward was offered by some sheriff in a Georgia town on a charge of forgery.

In the mean time a Sikeston bank that had been fleeced of \$40 on one of his checks filed complaint and the Bankers' Association offered a reward. He was arrested in Massachusetts and Sheriff Guber notified. At a cost of nearly \$200 Mr. Rucker was brought here.

When he was brought back here it was reported that he had become conscience-stricken and given himself up. In an automobile he was taken to Sikeston where Judge Parsons had set \$1,000 as the bond. But Prosecutor McWilliams thought this too much and it was reduced to \$500, which was given. On this event the Kicker said on May 25, 1912:

"Hon. Thos. F. Rucker, former editor and manager of the Scott County Democrat was brought in by Sheriff Guber last week on complaint of the People's Bank of Sikeston."

"Friday morning I called on Prosecutor McWilliams and asked if the amount of bond had been fixed. He said he had talked over the phone to Judge Parsons of Sikeston, who said \$1,000, but that he (McWilliams) considered this too high."

"Asked what the penalty was, he said from two to seven years. 'Of course the law works differently with different people. Perhaps that is the fault of the law.' 'Last summer when the authorities concluded to destroy my stairs after giving me permission to build them, I undertook to join them and have the matter heard in the circuit court. Judge Kingsbury, before whom the injunction proceedings were pending, fixed the bond at FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS. You were the attorney for the authorities, Mr. McWilliams. Did you consider that bond too high? I filled it, and then THE INJUNCTION WAS DENIED.'"

"If there are any good Democrats in this county suffering from that hallucination known as 'equality before the law,' I want them to KEEP AN EYE OPEN and see how 'the law' operates in this case as compared with its operation in the case of a poor devil whom necessity has driven to take a little food or clothing."

So said the Kicker at the beginning of this farce.
Having filed a better bond than I could have filled, Mr. Rucker remained here for several days the guest of the very "best people." Then he left and returned for the October term of court. Of the proceedings then the Kicker said on October 26, 1912:

"The case in which there was considerable local interest was that of Thos. F. Rucker, the late Democratic leader of the county, charged with obtaining money by means of false and bogus checks. Mr. Rucker appeared and the case was continued by the consent of the prosecuting attorney. He is

under bond signed by R. L. Stubeifield, Dr. U. P. Haw, J. H. Beiswinger, L. S. Mayfield, John S. Norman, Wm. Kirkendall and J. R. Young. The docket does not show that he has any attorney."

At the April term, 1913, the Kicker had this to say: "The matter that is evidently worrying the party is the Thos. F. Rucker case. Mr. Rucker was here and the case was again continued, but the docket does not show by whom, nor why? Last October the docket showed that the case was continued by 'consent.' I have not the least desire to see Mr. Rucker nor anyone else punished. I do not believe in the barbaric practice of punishment as a cure for crime. It does no good. But I want our people to get next to HOW 'the law' works. SO KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE RUCKER CASE."

At the August term, 1913, Mr. Rucker did not appear. But it wasn't necessary. The case was kindly continued. Of the October term the Kicker said:

"The case of Thos. F. Rucker, charged with obtaining money by means of false and bogus checks, has been continued some more. I am unable to tell you why, nor on what grounds. For the past two terms Mr. Rucker has not showed up. The docket does not show that he has any attorney representing him. But it is evident that the case is being 'properly' taken care of."

At the opening of the present term of court Mr. Rucker had not yet showed up. Had it been you, Mr. Hayseed, or me, the bond would have been forfeited on our first failure to appear. But in this case it was different.

When Judge Kelly called off the docket and came to this case, he twisted some and told the clerk to make an entry to the effect that he disqualified himself and set the case for May 4th before Judge Ranney. When I learned this I wondered why the judge had not disqualified himself before granting so many continuances. It is my understanding that Mr. Kelly was originally employed to defend Rucker.

Anyhow, it seems that J. H. Beiswinger, one of the sureties, heard of Rucker's whereabouts and sent Hallick Wilson after him last week. Evidently Mr. Beiswinger began to doubt the ability of those in authority to "properly" take care of the case much longer. Hence on Thursday he brought Rucker in and turned him over to the sheriff.

Friday morning the machinery of so-called justice was set in motion and he was set free.

If you want further particulars you will have to inquire of the limbs of the law here.

Had it been me, I would have got the limit at the very first term of court and would now have had 18 months of my term served out.

Equality before the law, they call it.

The tax-payers can now dig up the costs—which is considerable. The officers need the money. It was no joke when the Democrats put it in their platform. 'The courts of justice are the bulwark of OUR liberties.' Ask Rucker.

Citizens, if you are satisfied to be governed by a political machine that can convict a man of libel for publishing recorded facts and can turn another man loose for having obtained hundreds of dollars fraudulently, all you need do to continue this is to keep the present ring on the job.

But hold on here. I guess I had better back up a little. A fellow has to be mighty careful when discussing our best people. Might run up against another libel suit. That part in the foregoing paragraph about Mr. Rucker having obtained the hundreds of dollars fraudulently I take back. "The law" here says he didn't do it. As I understand "the law," he was just mistaken about the size of his pile at the bank. Just another "honest mistake," as Will Hutton of Commerce would call it.

No. Rucker violated no law—according to the Scott county code—just as I knew he hadn't. So long as you stick to "the party," that is impossible. He should return and sue for damages for false arrest, imprisonment and defamation of character.

In the circuit court proceedings last week I did not mention any of the cases that were continued, for the reason that I considered a continuance unimportant. But in other papers appeared the announcement, "Phil A. Hafner vs. R. L. Buck, libel, continued by consent," and I have had inquiries as to why? Hence I will give a brief review of the case to date.

On September 19, 1913, I went to the circuit clerk's office to file the suit. There was no circuit clerk and no deputy. I was told that Circuit Clerk Arnold had gone to the Cape and would return that night.

The next day was the last day

on which service could be had for the October term, 1913. I was on hand early and waited for nearly two hours before Mr. Arnold came. When he came I filed the suit.

But the sheriff said he could not find Mr. Buck to get service, and Mr. Buck said he evaded the sheriff. I don't know anything about this. All I know is that the failure to get service delayed the case six months.

A few days later the papers were served. This put the case on docket for the October term, but the defense was not "in court," because of not having had the required 30 days notice.

Usually in filing a suit the names of attorneys appear, but I did not want to disclose my attorneys and the papers were signed by me only. My attorneys assured me that the case could not come up and that it was unnecessary for them or myself to appear in court last October.

Court opened and the docket was called. When this case was reached Judge Kelly wanted to know, "who are the attorneys in this case?"

For some time there was no reply. Presently Mr. Mosley got up and said, "I understand Mr. Cramer is attorney for the plaintiff."

Then the judge turned to me: "Who are your attorneys in this case?"

Fearing punishment for "contempt of court"—which, for the life of me, I could not avoid—I admitted that Mr. Cramer was my attorney.

"Well, you had better get him here," was court's order. "I don't know where he is. The last I knew of him he was in New Madrid."

"Well, you want to get him here."

"By what time?" "Before court adjourns this evening."

I was stumped. The court had been so patient with Mr. Rucker and had continued his case from term to term, apparently on his own motion. But in my case he wanted action right now—and the defense not legally in court.

I did not want to uncover the other attorney in the case, Mr. Bailey, of Sikeston, and I did not know where Mr. Cramer was. But things seemed to be rushing. Just then—more so than before or since—and I returned to the court and asked the purpose of all this.

"I am not going to try this case," said the court, "and I want to make some disposition of it." Now, the defense WAS NOT IN COURT, if I understand anything about court juggling. But I called up Mr. Bailey and told him what was going on. He expressed surprise and said he would talk to Mr. Mosley, attorney for Mr. Buck, during the noon hour.

After dinner Mr. Bailey called me up and told me that it had been arranged to try the case before Judge Walker at the special term in January.

I asked Mr. Bailey to come to Benton at once; that I had matters to talk about that I did not care to go over the phone. He came and I will tell you what I said—although I did not want to pass over the phone.

"Mr. Bailey," said I, "it looks to me like it might be a trap. I have no fear of a jury selected by the present county court, for it is politically mixed court—Republican and Democratic. If we agree to go to trial in January the present jury will probably be discharged and the Democrats will have the selection of the entire jury. I have gone up against two juries of that sort and know what it means. I consider Sheriff Ellis a good man, but he is new and I don't know what he might do in a case of this kind."

Accordingly the case was set for the April term, 1914. Plans went right on to have a special term in January—even to the summoning of jurors. But it did not happen.

When court opened here last month, in the absence of my attorneys the court and attorneys for defense set the case for trial before Judge Ranney on May 5. On that date Mr. Bailey, one of my attorneys, had to appear in the appellate court in the mandamus proceedings against county officials who refused to surrender their books to the county court to be audited by Mare Broe. Perhaps the court and the attorneys for defense did not know of this. When Mr. Bailey learned of it an agreement was reached to try the case May 6.

Saturday, May 2, Judge Kelly DISCHARGED THE REGULAR JURORS and ordered the sheriff to get a new jury for Monday, when Judge Ranney took the bench.

So that the reader will understand what follows, I will say that in filing the plaintiff must set out in his petition his grievances, and the defense has until the first day of the following term to answer.

The answer was filed in proper time and contained what is called a "general denial." On Monday,

May 2, Mr. Bailey said to me, "It will be impossible to go to trial. I have just been notified that a lengthy amended answer will be filed, and it will be impossible for us to prepare the reply in time." Later the amended answer was filed, containing six and a half closely type-written pages of legal cap. If there is anything in this amended answer I fail to discover it—but it had the effect of getting our consent to a continuance.

For fifteen years the organs of the court house have been telling the people all sorts of ugly things about me. Now that I am offering them an opportunity to prove some of it, they don't seem to be in any hurry about it.

"MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY" IN ROCKEFELLER'S CHURCH

New York, May 10.—A dozen persons, led by Bowke White, were beaten and thrown out of Calvary Baptist church, which John D. Rockefeller attends, when White tried to speak at the morning service.

The ushers seized and dragged White up the aisle while he claved at every pew and pillar, and braced his feet to hold back. The whole congregation was on its feet and cries of "let him talk," "shame, shame," "put him out," "this is the house of God," resounded all over the church.

A half dozen fist fights started immediately between the ushers and the followers of White.

One stranger was beaten by ushers and police in the vestibule until he stood helpless, with blood all over. A member of the congregation who started up the aisle, had a hand clapped over his mouth and his hands pinned to his side until he explained who he was.

When White was being dragged up the aisle, Milo Woolen rose to shout a protest. Six men grabbed him. He was lifted and carried to the church doors, his wife following. There the six gave Woolen one good swing into the asphalt street. His nose struck first, and he skidded several feet on his face.

Mrs. Wollem was arrested too, a young man whom the police lost track of, arose in a pew and was pounced on by three ushers. People sitting in adjacent pews said that one usher held the youth's hands pinned to his side while another usher or detective deliberately struck the struggling prisoner several times on the jaw.

Emanuel Lopes and Henry Ephraim, both Portuguese and supporters of White, had followed their leader to the Sixth avenue corner. He sent them back with the injunction to "preach the word of God to these people."

The sight of White, half naked and surrounded by police, was too much for the Portuguese. They ran back on Fifty-seventh street to the front of the church shouting: "You are all murderers. You murdered the men in Colorado. This is what they did to Christ."

Two girls in their teens, members of the church had run out in the riot. What Lopes and Ephraim said angered them.

"We're not murderers," cried Gladys Davis, jumping in front of the two men. "This is the house of God."

Lopes raised his arms and shrieked: "This is the house of hell."

A crowd shouted: "Kill him!" "Shut him up!"

A man shoved Lopes toward the curb. Then a half dozen men closed in on the Portuguese and beat him fearfully. A police billy came crunching against the bones of Lopes' legs. It struck as hard as a man could swing it eight times. Afterwards Lopes' legs seemed to be broken on hasty inspection by an ambulance surgeon. A fist planted on Lopes' jaw knocked out two teeth.

His lip was torn open. A terrible blow in the eye made it swell and blacken instantly. Ephraim tried to help his companion and was pretty badly beaten too. A minute later Lopes was leaning against the church with blood running to the door sill.

Neither John D. Rockefeller nor his son were at the services.

Tarrytown, N. Y., May 16.—Sixteen agitators, twelve men and four women, in charge of Arthur Carson, came to Tarrytown this morning, and proceeded to Pocatello Hill, where they picketed the entrance of Rockefeller's estate until 1 o'clock.

They were greeted by four guards at each gate, each guard armed with clubs and guns. The marchers split up in two parties, one going to the entrance of John D. Jr.'s home, while the others paraded in front of the entrance to the home of John D. Sr.

The marchers kept up their march until noon, when they sat down by the roadside and had lunches, after which all returned to New York. The men were dressed in black and wore white gloves.

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WATCH AND LEARN. Wouldn't it jar you if time proved that our butting into Mexico was not because of any insult of Huerta, but for the purpose of subduing the rebels? What would you think of our government if it should turn out that way? Keep an eye on Mexico and see if we don't "benevolently assimilate" these rebels as we did the Filipino rebels.

The Kicker is a pretty good prophet, and I feel as sure that we will turn our guns on the rebels as I was sure that Ed Butler, the Democratic boss of St. Louis, would never go to prison, or that Rucker would go free. In these cases the Kicker can unblushingly say "I told you so."

Things are shaping around just right for it. In the outset we were very indignant because our flag had been insulted by Old Huerta and we were going right down and avenge that insult. Then rebellion broke out in Colorado and we slowed up a little. At first we were awfully spunky—and so was Huerta. But after we had spent a few million both sides agreed to arbitrate—a thing that Huerta proposed in the outset.

It was right at this point, it seems to me, that the cat slipped out. The rebel leaders were invited to send representatives to take part in the arbitration!

What had they to do with the quarrel, or pretended quarrel, between Wilson and Huerta? Not a thing and they were smart enough to keep hands off.

The rebels have practically got Huerta licked and are in control of the greater part of Mexico. As I see it, the scheme was to get the rebels to quit walking on Huerta and agree to arbitrate.

Had they done this the Big Business interests would have controlled the arbitrators and the rebels would have been handed the dirty end of the stick.

And without the rebels there is nothing to arbitrate. The flubbing about that insult to the flag is all bunk.

And if the rebels refuse to go up against a "packed" arbitration machine, we will just have to go after them with machine guns. We must protect the interests of Rockefeller, Morgan, Guzenheim and "the church" down in Mexico.

GOING TO IT.

Last week the Kicker said that it was not likely that another organized fight would be made in this county on the booze traffic until the women have the ballot. But indications are that the plumes are going to start some thing right away to get our people to quarreling and lose sight of the rotten conditions in our public affairs.

From Sikeston—the real seat of county government—comes the report that we are to have another local option election this fall. The time is rotten ripe for it. I can't think of any other plan by which the masters could be quite so sure of continuing their tools in power.

The booze question sure sets the masses to fighting and paving the air. All real issues would be side-tracked. The hellish tyranny and lawlessness would be shelved and we would march the mothers and children out to sing and pray, while their husbands and fathers financed the saloons.

The hired organs who are booming R. L. Ward for Joe Russell's place in Congress tell us that Ward was "raised on a farm." For the good of society generally it might have been better if he had remained on the farm. Farmers should beware of the politician who puts the loud pedal on being "raised on the farm."

CONGRATULATED THEM

A Polish couple came before a justice of the peace to be married. The young man handed him the marriage license, and the pair stood up before him.

"Join hands," said the justice. They did so and the justice looked at the document, which authorized him to unite in matrimony Zacharewicz Perzynski and Leokowads Jeulinski.

"Ahem," he said. Zacharewicz, do you take this woman?" etc. "Yes, sir," responded the young man.

"Leo-hm-hm-ski, do you take this man to be?" etc. "Yes, sir," replied the woman.

"Then I pronounce you man and wife," said the justice, glad to find something he could pronounce, "and I heartily congratulate you both on having reduced those two names to one."

—London Opinion.

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IN THE SOUTHEAST.

What the People are Doing in Other Counties that are Near.

At Essex, in Stoddard county, last week, Miss Elvina Howlett shot and killed Albert Waters. It seems that she had been deceived by Waters under promise of marriage and had given birth to a child. She shot her deceiver four times and killed him instantly. Now she will have to stand trial for murder. The jury will be composed of twelve men and no women. These men can view the matter from the view-point of man only and the suffering, mental torture and humiliation of the woman will get scant consideration. The lower order of the capitalist mind, which is dominant, regards woman as property. It traffics in women as it does in mules—only worse. This is clearly established by the uncovering of the white slave traffic. To deceive a woman is considered no more of a moral crime than to deceive a neighbor in a horse trade. While the capitalist will bow and scrape, tip his hat and appear very polite to women, yet he is not willing to grant her citizenship and make of her a citizen and an equal. He cares very little about what happens to women—unless it happens to be HIS woman. THEN he is ready to fight and kill as if it had been his choice bird dog.

At Poplar Bluff last week Floyd Perry, five years old, was instantly killed, his sister and a girl friend were badly injured, and Mrs. L. C. Leuerwood and her son Elmer were seriously hurt when a team belonging to Wm. Berry became frightened at an automobile and dashed down a street to a bridge, finally colliding with a wagon driven by Mrs. Leuerwood. The wagon was turned over and Mrs. Leuerwood was pinned under the bed and badly cut and bruised. Elmer was thrown out and suffered several bruises. The automobile is a splendid invention for killing and crippling people. If the owners were not of the ruling class their recklessness would not be tolerated. When the farmer comes along with his automobile in the shape of a threshing engine, he has to travel slow, whistle and toot at crossings, and stop and send someone ahead at the approach of a team.

Jackson Items.—During a thunder shower, about the first one this spring with any considerable amount of lightning, Tuesday night, about nine o'clock a bolt struck the barn on the farm of G. Pink Morton, about five miles northeast of Jackson, and set fire to the structure. The flames spread very rapidly and consequently but little of the contents were saved. A mare and two young mules, one a yearling and the other two year old were lost. Among the other contents burned were 150 bushels of corn 50 bushels of stock peas, hay enough to last during the season, one wagon and some machinery and harness. The loss is partly covered by insurance in the Farmers Mutual.

Sikeston Hornet.—Just as Ert Davis, the ice man, had started into the door with a piece of ice he saw a sight, the memory of which is likely to remain with him for some time. Last Sunday morning as he opened the kitchen door of the residence of Mrs. J. A. Laney he looked up just in time to see Mrs. Laney complete the drawing of a huge butcher knife across her throat. Davis was too mystified and frightened to assist the sinking woman, but soon spread the alarm. Neighboring women soon began to scream, and this attracted the attention of a brother, Wm. Scott.

Sikeston Hornet.—At the regular sitting of the city council Monday night a petition, praying for a local option election, was presented that body and after ascertaining that it contained a sufficient number of qualified voters the council set June 9th as the day to hold the same in this city. It is said a petition will be filed with the county court at its next meeting, praying that august body order an election held in the county on the same day.

Malden Merit.—The Merit has about lost its patience in regard to some things of public concern in Malden and has decided to publish in detail the cause of some individual acts and call things by their proper names. We do not relish such, but the public is entitled to know what is what and who is who. So look a little out and call us a Socialist if you choose.

A Wayne County boy, nine years old, was recently dragged to death by a mule. He was sent to lead the animal to water and thoughtlessly tied the rope about his waist. The animal became frightened, ran away and the boy was dead before the mule could be stopped.

Rural exchanges are again printing that old joke about the newspaper law which they claim is a decision of the United States supreme court, compelling them to pay for papers that are forced on them. There is no such law and no such decision.

Malden Merit.—A little "rukus" in the east part of town, Monday, resulted disastrously for one of the participants. Chas. Plunkett and wife, formerly "Laura Creed," live just over the line in New Madrid county, and were on their way home when they met Oa. Bratton and wife who had been out on the ditch fishing. Bratton carried a single-barrel shot gun of the vintage of 1888 and which is worth fully \$1.25 on six months credit. John Short happened to be going one way or the other and was so timed as to appear on the spot when the row started. The two women started a fuss over a debt alleged to be due from Mrs. Plunkett to Mrs. Bratton, and from fussing soon went to fighting. Bratton then interfered and struck the Plunkett woman over the head with his gun, inflicting a considerable wound. Plunkett, maybe, made some kind of a demonstration and Bratton attempted to strike him with the gun, holding the barrel in his hand and striking with the butt. The gun went off and, at the same instant, a portion of Bratton's anatomy, the whole load of shot entering his body near the thigh. The wounded man was badly hurt, but will survive.

Bloomfield Vindicator.—Tom Bailey, of Aid, was rather seriously injured Wednesday morning by being struck a glancing blow with the end of an axe. He was assisting J. G. Kirby gun stumps when the axe being used by one of Kirby's boys slipped, inflicting a four inch scalp wound on the top of Bailey's head. Doctors Evans and Tiller dressed the wound and we understand he is getting along nicely.

Bernie News.—Attorney W. E. Edmonds, informed a representative of the News, there would be three Republican candidates for Congress subject to the primary and the one elected shall have his earnest support. However, he said he did not care who was elected. The candidates are Jas. A. Finch of Farnett, T. J. Brown of Charleston and S. E. Bronson of Ozark.

While our system may not be productive of any great statesmen and poets, yet we are manufacturing burglars and safe crackers by the wholesale. The safe in the Parma postoffice was blown open and about \$300 in stamps and \$200 in cash taken and the experts left no address. Such acts are mighty common. Subscribe for the only Kicker.

ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS. Some of the wasps are paper-makers; the spiders are spinners and the worms are weavers. The ants are indefatigable workers and have a well organized system of labor.

Certain species of East Indian ants are horticulturists; they raise mushrooms upon which they feed their young.

The bees are expert builders; their cells are so constructed as, with the least quantity of material, to have the largest sized rooms and the least possible loss of wall space.

So also are the ant-lions, whose funnel-shaped traps are exactly correct in conformation, as if they had been made by the most skilled architects of our species with the aid of the best instruments.

The beaver is an architect, engineer and woodcutter; he builds houses and dams water-courses with the ingenuity and dispatch that would do credit to human hands and brains. We all know what it means to "work like a beaver."

The spiders are skilled spinners. Their webs of great variety and intricate patterns are in reality marvels of construction. Each is made to serve the combined purpose of a trap and a castle.—Our Dumb Animals.

TALK THAT COUNTS.

Ephum Johnson was up before Judge Schimmerpate on a cruelty to animals charge.

"Deed Ah wasn't busin' that mule, judge," the old man demurred.

"Did you not strike it repeatedly with a club?"

"Yassah."

"And do you not know that you can accomplish more with animals by speaking to them?" "Yassah," but dis critter am diffint. He am so deaf he can't hear me when Ah spaks to him in de usual way, so Ah has to communicate wid him in de sign language."—Youngstown Telegram.

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